

Message Text

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EXDIS

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TAGS: PFOR, UK, SP, NATO

SUBJECT: SPAIN AND NATO - AMBASSADOR'S CONVERSATION
WITH CALLAGHAN

REF: STATE 82725 (NOTAL)

1. IN MY MEETING TODAY WITH CALLAGHAN I REFERRED TO US NEGOTIATIONS WITH SPAIN ON RENEWAL OF BASE RIGHTS AGREEMENT. I SAID THAT FROM A POLITICO-MILITARY VIEWPOINT THE SITUATION ON THE SOUTHERN FLANK OF NATO WAS NOW FAR MORE CRITICAL THAN EVER. IF IN ADDITION TO THE REVERSES TO NATO THAT HAVE OCCURRED IN SOUTHEASTERN AND SOUTHWESTERN MEDITERRANEAN, THERE WERE A WEAKENING OF THE US-SPANISH RELATIONSHIP THE SITUATION FOR THE ALLIANCE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN COULD BECOME VERY SERIOUS. I ALSO NOTED THAT US NEGOTIATIONS WITH SPAIN HAD NOW REACHED THE POINT WHERE SOME FORM OF SPANISH ASSOCIATION WITH NATO SEEMED NECESSARY FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF FULL ENJOYMENT OF OUR FACILITIES IN SPAIN.

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2. CALLAGHAN INQUIRED WHETHER THE OBJECT OF THIS EXERCISE WAS TO PREVENT A SITUATION FROM DEVELOPING IN WHICH SPAIN WOULD TURN TOWARD A DICTATORSHIP OF THE LEFT. I RESPONDED THAT THE FUTURE WAS A MATTER OF CONJECTURE BUT THE INFLUENCE OF MODERATES IN GOVERNING CIRCLES IN SPAIN WOULD BE CONSIDERABLY STRENGTHENED IF SOME SORT OF ASSOCIATION OF SPAIN WITH NATO COULD BE WORKED OUT. THIS, I STRESSED, WOULD CONSIDERABLY AID THE PROBLEM OF THE US IN THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS.

3. I THEN SAID THAT I WOULD LIKE TO ENCOURAGE CALLAGHAN TO STUDY POSSIBLE FORMS OF AFFILIATION OR ASSOCIATION OF SPAIN WITH NATO WHICH MIGHT BE FEASIBLE FROM THE BRITISH VIEWPOINT. IT SEEMED TO ME THAT THERE WERE SOME MODALITIES WHICH COULD REDUCE THE DANGER OF AN ADVERSE POLITICAL FALL OUT, ALTHOUGH I RECOGNIZED THE POLITICAL DELICACY OF THE MATTER FOR THE BRITISH. I ADDED THAT THE US FEELS STRONGLY THAT THE ALLIANCE SHOULD TAKE A LOOK AT SOME KIND OF SPANISH TIE WITH NATO. THE US WOULD, I FELT SURE, BE PLEASED TO EXPLORE MODALITIES WITH BRITISH OFFICIALS.

4. CALLAGHAN SAID HE COULD NOT FAULT US ON THE NECESSITY OF SPANISH SUPPORT FOR THE SOUTHWESTERN FLANK OF NATO. IN THE NEXT BREATH, HOWEVER, HE EXPANDED ON THE DEPTH OF FEELING IN THE UK ABOUT SPAIN, PARTICULARLY BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY IN THE LABOR PARTY. TO MY OBSERVATION THAT IT WAS AN IRONY THAT WE WERE NOW ALLIES OF TWO FORMER ENEMIES OF WORLD WAR II WHILE THE ALLIANCE WAS HOLDING SPAIN AT A DISTANCE, CALLAGHAN OBSERVED THAT IT WAS WIDELY FELT HERE THAT THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR HAD LED TO GENERAL WAR IN EUROPE. OBSERVING THE TIMING WAS VERY IMPORTANT, CALLAGHAN SAID HE WOULD BE AGREEABLE TO HAVING DISCUSSIONS AT THE LEVEL OF OFFICIALS PROVIDED IT WAS UNDERSTOOD THAT THERE WOULD BE NO PROSPECT OF ANY IMMEDIATE CHANGE IN THE BRITISH POSITION. HE SUGGESTED THAT ONE COULD PREPARE A SCENARIO FOR THE PERIOD AFTER FRANCO LEFT THE SCENE IN WHICH NATO COULD OFFER CERTAIN INDUCEMENTS TO SPAIN TO STAY ON A DEMOCRATIC COURSE, INCLUDING SPANISH ASSOCIATION WITH NATO. HOWEVER, HE STRESSED THERE WAS NO PROSPECT WHILE FRANCO WAS ALIVE OF THE

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BRITISH MAKING A MOVE TOWARDS SPAIN SUCH AS SPANISH MEMBERSHIP IN NATO.

5. I ASKED CALLAGHAN WHAT SORT OF SCENARIO HE COULD ENVISAGE ENTAILING SOMETHING LESS THAN MEMBERSHIP, I.E., SOME SORT OF ASSOCIATION. CALLAGHAN RESPONDED CATEGORICALLY THAT FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE IT WOULD NOT BE ON; NOT JUST BECAUSE OF BRITISH ATTITUDES BUT ATTITUDES OF

EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AS WELL. THE FARTHEST HE COULD
PROMISE TO GO WOULD BE PRIVATE US-UK DISCUSSIONS AT A
LOW LEVEL. RICHARDSON

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